

Daily Astorian.

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THE OREGONIAN'S NEW WHEAT RATE.

Discussing the merits of Astoria's claims to equal railway rates with the cities of Puget sound from interior common points, among other things, the Astorian recently said:

The Astorian's claim is that wheat delivered by the railroads at the mouth of the Columbia river, without extra freight charges to the producers, through the extension to the seaboard port of Astoria of the same common-point freight rates charged to the more distant and inaccessible ports on Puget sound, would net the producers at least \$2,500,000 more on the average crop than is now realized at Portland prices.

Pretending to reply to this paragraph, while careful not to deny a single letter of its assertions, the Oregonian yesterday attempted to reduce the Astorian's position to an absurdity in the following language. It said:

From this statement it is easily deductible that four-fifths of this money may at once be saved to the producers and the other one-fifth secured for operation and profit by the Astoria railroad. The amount of wheat and flour shipped from the Columbia river last year—the best year and heaviest shipments ever known—was about 500,000 tons. The saving, then, of two and one-half million dollars—would be five dollars a ton. Now one dollar a ton from Portland to Astoria would enable the Astoria railroad to make a good deal of money. It is as good a thing as a railroad would want. Thus, of the \$2,500,000—the increased value which 500,000 tons of wheat would leave at Astoria—there would be \$2,000,000 left for distribution among the producers.

The Astorian's claim, as fairly stated in the paragraph quoted, is that the recognition of Astoria as the export market for Columbia basin wheat, by its delivery here without any additional freight charge to that now collected for its more expensive transportation to Puget sound, would so enhance the value of each average crop raised in the inland Empire as to NET the producers \$2,500,000 more than can be realized at the present Portland ruling price. It will be observed that no mention is made of profits to be paid out of this saving to the Astoria railroad, nor is that a matter with which the producer under common-point arrangements would have anything to do. The common-point asked by Astoria is a common-point on the O. R. & N. line and its eastern connections from the wheat-producing area, and it does not contemplate the necessary use or em-

ployment of the Astoria road to any extent whatever, unless it shall be found more convenient or desirable by the O. R. & N. to transport the grain between Portland and Astoria by that road than by its own through line.

So far as the amount of aggregate saving that can thus be effected is concerned, the Astorian contends that the better price which might have been obtained at the mouth of the Columbia river on even one-third of the total crop of the inland Empire, or the 500,000 tons which the Oregonian estimates as the amount of wheat shipped from the Columbia river last year, would have so affected the price of the remainder of the crop—either as exported from Puget sound or consumed by the mill trust at home—that the value of the entire crop in the producers' hands would have netted them \$2,500,000, or \$1.86 2-3—not \$5—a ton more than they actually received.

Finally, attention is called to the vital admission made by the Oregonian that a rate of one dollar a ton on wheat for the 100-mile haul between Portland and Astoria "would enable the Astoria railroad to make money, and a good deal of money," and that "it is as good a thing as a railroad would want." The Astorian quite agrees with the Oregonian in this contention. In fact, one of the complaints the Astorian has been making against the O. R. & N. Company for several years is its refusal to reduce its rate charged on wheat from interior points to something like this reasonable sum. That road now charges the Eastern Oregon and Washington producer nearly two dollars for each 100-mile haul it moves his wheat toward tide water. If the Oregonian would aid the Astorian in forcing the wheat rates of the O. R. & N. down to one dollar a ton for each 100-mile haul, Portland, Oregon, and the whole Columbia basin would get a substantial benefit from that road's water-level grades, and the producers could get an average of much more than one dollar a ton better price for their wheat even in Portland. A reduction of the O. R. & N. rate to this sum which the Oregonian declares to be "as good a thing as a railroad would (or should) want" would more than wipe out the difference in the price of wheat which now favors the Puget sound market over Portland. It would, indeed, be a grand thing for the whole Northwest if the O. R. & N. were willing to accept this "good thing as a railroad would (or ought to) want."

With this concession by the O. R. & N., no extension of the common-point is required to make Astoria equal with the Puget sound ports. Or rather with the rate suggested by the Oregonian on the O. R. & N. to Portland, the producer can well stand the same proportion differential on the haul from Portland to Astoria, and Astoria will then have so much advantage over Puget sound ports that the saving in trans-shipment export wheat to the vessel at Astoria instead of at Puget sound or Portland will enhance the value of each average crop in the hands of the producer much more than the Astorian's estimate of \$2,500,000—in fact, it would make the producers of the Columbia nearly, if not quite, \$5,000,000 better off each year. The Oregonian has struck the keynote at last, and every producer and dweller in the Columbia basin should thank the Astorian for having started its great and influential contemporary on the right track.

GREAT LUMBER CONTRACT. Spokane Chronicle. The New York Sun has confirmation of the statement made some weeks ago that the British government has contracted with a lumber firm in Beaumont, Texas, to supply it with 500,000,000 feet of pine lumber. The magnitude of the contract at first excited incredulity, because that amount of lumber will make it necessary to dispatch a vessel carrying 500,000 feet of lumber every day for two years, and would require a fleet of nearly 100 vessels in constant employment. But it seems it is true. The contract was with one firm, and it was kept as secret as possible until it could make arrangements with other lumber firms, and it is fixed now so that twenty mills will work on the contract, each cutting 40,000 feet of lumber a day. It will deforest some 100,000 or 120,000

acres of land. The lumber is for Cecil Rhodes' Cape & Cairo road. It is understood the shipments are to be made mainly from Sabine Pass, which is most convenient for the lumber districts of Louisiana and Texas. It has advanced the price of pine lands to a figure which deemed impossible a year ago. It has stimulated the industry, and nearly every mill has put in additional machinery to increase its output. As a sample of how the thing is done, in Calcutta Parish, La., 14,035 acres were bought by the Bancroft Lumber Company of Orange, Texas, for \$175,000 or more than \$12 an acre, or twice what it could have been bought for two years ago. At Lake Charles, La., which is the center of the yellow pine district of Louisiana, the mills are running night and day and do not expect to shut down for eighteen months.

It is said the chief difficulty in the way is securing the vessels to transport the lumber, which will go to South Africa directly, and securing of necessary labor, especially since many mills have laid down the rule that all labor shall be white. It means \$5,000,000 to the lumber companies of the South. And still it is wonderful that the contract was let in Louisiana and Texas. The natural place for it was in Puget sound, except that the Puget sound mills are worked to their full capacity now. For Australia, Hawaii, Japan, China and the Philippines. But it would not have taken any hundred thousand acres of Washington or Oregon timber. They have single trees up there which make more lumber than half an acre of Louisiana forest.

FOR THE SENATE.

Corvallis Union-Gazette. Upon the next legislature of our state will devolve the duty of electing our United States senator. For many reasons this will be for Oregon, one of its most important public events. The questions that will come before the next sessions of congress will equal in weight and magnitude anything that has come before that body since the days of the early '60s. The election of which members of our state legislature will be chosen will occur next June and it is none too early to discuss possible and eligible candidates for national senator.

Oregon is proverbially slow to take advantage of changed condition but the recent and radical changes that have come upon us with the advent of our national development in the Pacific ocean demand that Oregon shall take a prominent stand upon the various questions that will arise in the nation's councils. Oregon must be in the front rank of Pacific coast states in all that pertains to the development of Pacific and trans-Pacific civilization and commerce. The first and most important step looking to this end is the election of an able, vigorous man to the senate. If Oregon is to take and keep the place she is entitled to hold in the councils of the nation, and especially in so far as they relate to Pacific coast matters, then she must send a strong man to the nation's council chamber. Among those who have been mentioned as possible candidates is Mr. W. H. Scott and of him it can certainly be said he is an able and strong man. The Union-Gazette has no authority for announcing Mr. Scott as a candidate. It does not know that he would be a candidate; in fact, he has said he would not be, but his name has been frequently mentioned of late as that of one who could ably, vigorously and creditably represent this state in the United States senate. The great question coming up for settlement before the councils of the nation, and which must be settled in the next two or three years, are the money question—and on this issue Mr. Scott is fitted to represent the views of this state—Then there is the Nicaragua canal; a form of government for Alaska; the Hawaiian Islands; the Philippine Islands; and our rapidly growing trade relations with China and the Orient. On all these questions Mr. Scott has profound knowledge and the gift to impart it, and those who know him do not doubt that he would be heard and felt as a state legislator.

For thirty-five years Mr. Scott has fearlessly discussed public men and politics and there are few men that

could have managed this sorry thankless task and stood the test of public opinion as well as he has. He has been a power, yes, in many instances his pen through the columns of the great paper he has edited, has been the power that he has spoken for Oregon's development. But it is not for this service that he is entitled to be considered a senatorial candidate; it is because of his peculiar fitness, his vigor, strength and knowledge of our national and state needs that makes him an especially eligible person for this place at this time.

There are other candidates that will come in for consideration later, but suffice it to say at this time, that in Mr. Scott Oregon would have a senator in whose ability and power she could well take pride.

PRESIDENT ARRIVES. MILWAUKEE, Oct. 16.—The special train bearing President McKinley and party arrived in this city this evening. After a reception the party resumed its journey eastward.

LONDON'S MYRAID POOR. "Where richest are massed in greatest abundance there poverty in its most appalling aspect has its abiding place," is a truth which was again demonstrated by the parliamentary commission lately appointed to examine into the old age pension question in London. The testimony gathered by it presents a mass of facts relating to the largest and most wealthy city in the world.

It disclosed among other things that in a population approximating about four and three-quarter millions, 400,000 lived in one-room houses, 20,000 persons were living six or more in one room, 3,000 seven or more; 3,000, eight or more. The annual increase of London's population is 50,000; average number of inmates in workhouses, 65,500; number of persons living in houses without proper breathing space, as directed by law, 500,000.

General Booth of the Salvation Army testified before the commission that 22 per cent, or about a million and a quarter, of London's population live amid conditions which fall below the line of chronic poverty.

Here, in the most wealthy and most populous city of Christendom, is a state of things which should make civilization stand appalled. The solving of the social and economic problem thus presented, by making of this misery-burdened and sin-tormented multitude self-supporting, comfortable and, therefore, self-respecting citizens, would be of more lasting benefit to the British nation than the conquest of all the world.

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